

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION

MINUTES

December 13, 2001

EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING AUDITORIUM
Rockville, Maryland

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Gordon A. Aoyagi, Chairman
Fernando Bren, Vice-Chairman
Thomas W. Carr, Jr.
Robert L. Freeman
Leonard Marco
Anita Powell
Paul Sterling, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Neil Shorb, Staff Director
George Giebel, Program Manager
Beth Feldman, Administrative Specialist
Connie Robinson, MCFRS
Richard H. Melnick, OCA

OTHERS PRESENT:

Chief Roger W. Strock, DFRS
Chief David S. Dwyer, DVFRS
Ron Watkins, President, MCVFRA
Clark Beall, Vice President, Laytonville, VFD
Eric N. Bernard, President, Rockville VFD
Amy Davis, Local 1664
Chief Thomas Jones, Glen Echo VFD
Assistant Chief Randy Wheeler, DFRS
Chief Dennis Urban, Bethesda FD
Debby McMurray, Rockville VFD
Chief Edward Sherburne, BCCRS
Marcine D. Goodloe, MCFB
Assistant Chief Philip Guercio, DFRS
Katherine M. Draper, DFRS
Chief Tom Rhodes, Jr., Sandy Spring VFD
District Chief Charles Patullo, DFRS
Chief William A. Hinde, Rockville VFD

Cheryl Reed, MCFRS
Darlene Flynn, MCFRS
Kevin L. Sanzenbacher, MCFRS
Frederick H. Welsh, DVFRS
Ken Strite, UMCVFD
Chief Michael Dmuchowski, Germantown VFD
Deputy Chief Robert Allwang, DFRS
Robert F. Kidd, President, Chevy Chase FD
Captain Ed Radcliffe, DFRS
District Chief Leonard Chornock, Rockville VFD
Virginia A. Miller, President, Bethesda FD
John F. Hall, Jr. Bethesda-Chevy Chase RS
Russell Dawson, RVFD and BCCRS
Andrea Eaton, Rockville VFD
Merril Oliver, MCFRS

100 - CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission was called to order by Chairman Aoyagi at 7:15 p.m. in the Lobby Auditorium of the Executive Office Building in Rockville, Maryland. Commissioner Ogens had an excused absence from tonight's meeting.

101-Comments-the Fire and Rescue Commissioners

Commissioner Bren made several announcements:

- The Latino Outreach Program will be held on January 21st at 6pm at Station 8.
- Firefighter III Carlos Alfaro is organizing a chapter of the National Association of Career Hispanic Firefighters in Montgomery County. There are an estimated 35 career Hispanic fire fighters and 70 Hispanic volunteer fire fighters.
- He expressed concern regarding a degeneration of relations between career and volunteer

fire/rescue personnel. He cited an example of a videotape that career firefighters allegedly refused to utilize because the tape depicts extensive involvement of volunteer firefighters during Fire Prevention week activities. Commissioner Bren requested the Fire Administrator to investigate this situation and report his findings to the FRC at the January 2002 FRC meeting.

- He would like Commission meetings to be more accessible to the public and requests that an ad hoc committee be created to determine how this can be done.

102-Report of the Chairman

FY03 Operating Budget

In light of the County's fiscal situation, the MCFRS will evaluate restructuring existing and remaining resources to respond to the increasing demand for service. The implementation of safety, wellness, and health initiatives to keep the cost of medical and property insurance down is being carefully considered. Several proposals to improve MCFRS responses include:

- Recommendations for the Emergency Preparedness Initiative, which was previously discussed before the Commission;
- Continued implementation of Water Supply Study recommendations, including assigning a tanker at Station 31;
- The PS 2000 communications system.
- Training to improve site assessment in the event of a disaster.

The Maximum Agency Request Ceiling (MARC) provided by the OMB requires MCFRS to trim its budget by \$4 million before submittal to the County Executive. In addition, a savings plan has been requested for FY02. In order to meet the FY02 savings goal of \$435,000, the Department is preparing adjustments for ambulance lease payments, and salary lapse from nine Information Technology and three administrative support positions. In addition, the County has instituted a hiring freeze, although this freeze does not apply to uniformed firefighter positions.

The Fire Administrator discussed MCFRS FY01 Expenditure Report concerning the Senator Amoss fund. Since the FY01 expenditure level exceeded the 3-year average, the funding allocations for FY02 should be at 100% of its allocation. The FY03 expenditures will need to be monitored closely to ensure that MCFRS maintains future funding levels to meet the State's maintenance of effort requirement.

Fire Administrator Aoyagi stated that he participated in several presentations regarding the County's readiness to deal with natural disasters, disruption of services, and terrorist acts.

103- Approval of Minutes of 10/11/01

Amendment to October 25, 2001 minutes: On page 4, the number of straw votes was corrected to seven.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling, SECONDED by Commissioner Bren, to approve the October 25, 2001 minutes as amended. PASSED unanimously.

Amendment to the November 8, 2001 minutes: Correct the record to show that Commissioner Sterling had an excused absence from the November 8th meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling, SECONDED by Commissioner Freeman to approve the November 8, 2001 minutes as amended. PASSED unanimously.

200- CONSENT CALENDAR

201- *Senator Amoss Fund Reallocation Request- Upper Montgomery -VFD*

202- *Request for Extension-Interim Policy for FRC Appeal Hearings*

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Freeman, SECONDED by Commissioner Marco to approve the Consent Calendar. PASSED unanimously.

300- FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS

301- Operations Committee

There was no report.

302- Human Resources, Safety and Training Committee

Commissioner Powell reported on the following items discussed at December 3rd HRST Committee meeting:

- The approved minutes for the October 1, 2001 and the November 5, 2001 HRST Committee meetings are included in tonight's packet.
- The new staff Psychologist for the MCFRS, Dr. Mike Beasely, has been hired.
- The Scope of Services to contract for the development of the new Volunteer EMS Provider Medical Standards continues to be reviewed.
- The PSTA Student Policy has been distributed for a 30-day field review period; comments are due by January 4, 2002.
- Takoma Park VFD is currently purchasing new treadmills.
- Fire Administrator Aoyagi had informed the Committee on the disposition of Anthrax scares in the County.

303- Finance, Technology, and Planning Committee

Commissioner Bren, Chair of the FTP Committee, reported that the approved minutes of the October 18, 2001 FTP Committee meeting are in the agenda packet. During that meeting, Neil Shorb reported that he is currently preparing a Request For Proposal to engage an insurance broker service for MCFRS. The current contract expires in March 2002.

400- BUSINESS ITEMS

401- Aerial Unit Study

After a brief discussion of some of the study's recommendations, Assistant Chief Phil Guercio recommended that the report be returned to the Operations Committee for further review, and then presented again to the FRC.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling, to defer action on the Aerial Unit Study until a future Commission meeting. SECONDED by Commissioner Bren PASSED unanimously.

402- Code of Ethics and On-duty Personal Conduct Temporary Regulation

Fire Administrator Aoyagi suggested that the *Code of Ethics and On-duty Personal Conduct* Executive Regulation be sent to the County Council and implemented immediately as a Temporary Executive Regulation, pending Council review and adoption of the permanent *Code of Ethics and On-duty Personal Conduct* Executive Regulation.

Commissioner Powell stated that she had been unable to review the document in detail because of the late delivery of the agenda packet. Commissioner Bren asked the Fire Administrator for his assurance that this document was the final version that the Commission had agreed to during the November 15, 2001 meeting. Fire Administrator Aoyagi confirmed that it was.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Carr to approve the *Code of Ethics and On-duty Personal Conduct* as a Temporary Executive Regulation. SECONDED by Commissioner Freeman, PASSED with Commissioners Bren, Carr, Freeman, Marco and Sterling voting for the motion and Commissioner Powell abstaining.

403- Incident Command System Interim Policy

A brief discussion was held regarding some of the operational changes that would be implemented to conform to the Mutual Aid Operational Plan (MOAP) identifiers during an incident. Commissioner Sterling expressed concern regarding possible confusion in using a green light, the color used throughout the state of Maryland to identify police, to indicate the incident's Command Post. Chief Allwang advised of the COG discussion of this issue, acknowledging the inter-jurisdictional operational inconsistencies among Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

A proposal to change the radio designation of "command" on incidents to a geographic identification rather than the first due engine is also being recommended to eliminate confusion when units run incidents first due in another station's response area.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Carr to adopt the resolution (attachment 403a in the agenda packet) which:

- 1. Approves the Incident Command System Interim Policy to make it consistent with the COG MAOP;**
- 2. Amends the radio identification of incident command to use a geographic identifier**

3. **rather than a numeric identifier; and
Repeals the existing ICS Regulation No. 58-89, subject to the County Executive's concurrence and the County Council's action.**

SECONDED by Commissioner Marco, and PASSED unanimously,

404- Establishment of ALS Chase Car Service in Friendship Heights-BCCRS

The provisions of the Operations Committee's recommendations were briefly discussed, and #4 was amended to: "It is understood that the ALS chase care will be dispatched as a first responder to BLS incidents, **as determined by ECC**, when it is the closest available unit."

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Carr to adopt the resolution (attachment 404a in tonight's agenda packet) with the changes referenced above which:

1. **It is understood this will be a six month pilot program;**
2. **It is contingent on the final recommendation to be made regarding the use of chase cars for the delivery of ALS service, which is currently under review by the EMS subcommittee;**
3. **The unit will be placed into controlled status when staffing is available. The BCCRS will address staffing coverage during rush hour periods;**
4. **It is understood that the ALS chase car will be dispatched as a first responder to BLS incidents when it is the closest available unit;**
5. **All costs associated with the establishment of the chase car (aside from County phone lines) will be borne by the BCCRS at no cost to the County.**

SECONDED by Commissioner Marco. PASSED unanimously.

405- EMS Dispatch Procedures

After considering a proposal from ECC staff, the Operations Committee is recommending approval of a change in EMS Dispatch Procedures. Specifically, the Committee recommends:

1. **The ECC supervisor continues to be permitted to exercise discretion regarding the dispatch of EMS units.**
2. **When a unit that is already on the scene of an incident requests additional BLS unit(s), the ECC supervisor be given the discretion to recommend sending the next closest BLS unit(s) instead of a closer ALS unit(s), only after ECC received concurrence of the Incident Commander or the unit making the request.**
3. **This procedure be implemented for a 90 day trial period.**

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sterling, to approve the change in EMS Dispatch procedures as recommended by the Operations Committee. SECONDED by Commissioner Marco and PASSED unanimously.

406-Reorganization of MCFRS Specialty Teams

Chief Allwang made a presentation regarding the current status and proposed reorganization of the MCFRS Specialty Teams. The purpose of the briefing was to outline proposed changes to the MCFRS Specialty Teams organizations this evening and to return in January with an outline of an implementation plan items and FRC action items. The teams that are deployed to work with Federal assistance include the Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR), and the National Medical Response Team (NMRT). The effort to reorganize the teams actually began before Sept 11, with the objective of improving their effectiveness. This reorganization effort is now a component of the County's approved Emergency Preparedness Initiative. Some recommendations include extending HAZMAT capabilities to a third station (Sta. 28); developing additional training programs; combining the River Rescue and Tactical Services (RRATS) and Underwater Recovery/Recovery Teams (URRT); disbanding the SET Team, and adding its members and their capabilities to both the USAR Team and the RRATS Team; and centralizing the USAR resources at Stations 29 and 31.

The Specialty Teams include both career and volunteer members. Commissioner Marco asked how many members of the teams are volunteers; Chief Allwang responded that he would provide this information during the January FRC meeting. Chief Strock stated that both career and volunteer members can continue to serve as team members, and that no skills would be lost. Commissioner Sterling stated that he supported the concept of the reorganization, but was concerned that many of the LFRD chiefs had not been consulted. Chief Allwang stated that some LFRDs knew about the proposed reorganization. Chief Dmuchowski of the Germantown VFD stated that although he was notified previously of the reorganization of the specialty teams, it has been over a year since he was notified of any recent changes. One concern was that when the Specialty Teams are deployed to an emergency incident, especially an extended one that occurs out of the County, coverage from the County's stations would be dangerously depleted. He requested a more detailed review on the deployment of the teams, and expressed concern that this information was not communicated to the LFRDs. The Fire Administrator responded that stations whose staffing was depleted because of a call-out would be back-filled as usual, providing adequate coverage.

Commissioner Carr urged the Commission to act immediately to improve Montgomery County's Specialty Team response capabilities. He was especially concerned about the length of time it takes to deploy the USAR Team because its members are not centralized. He discussed the critical importance of expediting the deployment of this team when it is activated, and urged the immediate creation of an additional satellite unit of the HAZMAT response team.

Chief Allwang will provide additional information regarding the proposed reorganization of the Specialty Teams at the January 10, 2002 FRC meeting.

A MOTION made by Commissioner Carr, to endorse an additional HAZMAT satellite unit at GWGFD Station 28 immediately. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Freeman and PASSED with Commissioners Carr, Freeman, Marco and Bren voting for the motion and Commissioners Powell and Sterling voting against it.

407-Establishment of Tanker Service at Fire Station 31

The Water Supply Study Implementation Work Group (WSSIWG) Report adopted by the Fire and Rescue Commission calls for the establishment of tanker service at Station 31 during FY 02 with a reserve tanker. Recently, the County has entered into a long-term lease agreement with the Laytonsville Volunteer

Fire Department regarding a 1984 Ford Tanker. The agreement indicates that the unit be located at the discretion of the MCFRS. The proposal is to locate the tanker at Station 31 and make it available to the PSTA for training when needed.

The RVFD supports this proposal, with the understanding that the implementation issues are addressed. No additional staffing will be provided for the tanker at this time.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Carr to establish tanker service at Fire Station 31 in accordance with the WSSIWG Report, SECONDED by Commissioner Bren. PASSED unanimously.

500-FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REPORTS

501-DVFRS Chief

DVFRS Chief Dwyer introduced Fred Welsh as the new Planning Manager. Mr. Welsh's primary responsibility will be in the area of volunteer recruitment and retention.

Chief Dwyer announced that the annual Chamber of Commerce Police and Fire/Rescue Valor Awards Banquet will be held in April, 2002, and that the Montgomery County Civic Association had recently presented service awards to both career and volunteer personnel.

502- DFRS Chief

DFRS Chief Strock stated that the EMS protocols had been sent out late, and that the completion deadline has been extended by one month. He reported that the new recruit class consists of 20 individuals. More information on the planned controlled burning exercises will follow.

503- Report of the Fire Board

President Bernard reported that the FireBoard is requesting an increase in the operating budget to extend services that will increase volunteer membership. The Fire Administrator will speak with Fred Welsh regarding working with the FireBoard concerning funding for recruitment and staffing.

504- Report of the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association

Chairman Ronnie Watkins extended holiday greetings to everyone on behalf of the MCFRA; there was no additional report.

505- Report of the Montgomery County Career Fire/Rescue Officers Association

No report.

506- Report of the Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association

No report.

FRC Meeting
December 13, 2001

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Bren, SECONDED by Commissioner Sterling, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. PASSED unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gordon A. Aoyagi
Chairman

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